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Life of Mahomet

Charles J. Finger

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FOREWORD

This little sketch, setting forth not only the life of Mahomet, but the events that followed fast on his death, is built up from a series of notes taken at different times, some while attending a course of lectures given by Edward Spencer Beesley, M.A., Professor of History in University College, London, others when reading the books here listed: Mahometan Theories of Taxation, by Nicholas P. Achnides; Ibrahim Pascha, by H. D. Jenkins, Ph.D.; The Spirit of Islam, by Syed Ayeer Ali; Life of Mahomet, by Sir W. Muir and Irving's Mahomet. Where dates are given, I have taken those as given in the pages of Haydn's Dictionary of Dates.

I have tried to avoid throwing a haze around my subject, presenting Mahomet neither as a half-god nor as a vulgar adventurer, for of the man's sincerity in his early days there can be no shadow of a doubt; but, naturally, as his religion passed into the sphere of practical politics, there had to be a trimming and a resorting to expediences.

The writing and publishing of this book shall not have been in vain, if, through it, some come to realize that the Turk is not the unintelligent person that many would try to make us believe, nor is his civilization one of primitive simplicity. It is important to realize that in these days, when all nations share in the general *malaise* of Europe and Asia.

CHARLES J. FINGER.

MAHOMET

A vein of rich interest is tapped when one commences to read of Mahomet and the work of his followers. It is like a tale from the Arabian Nights, a tale full of wonder and color, of glittering palaces and great battles, of a people sweeping north, and east, and west, and south, with the irresistibility of a vast storm: of strange practical wisdom and fantastic dreams. There are, interwoven with the history, legends of magic armor, of hidden treasure, of strange creatures supposed to live in the bowels of the earth and fly through the air, of heaven upon heaven through which the faithful and the brave will pass, of beasts, and birds, and strange things of the sea. And, as you look at the world and its swiftly moving changes from century to century, you see the onward march of the Saracen checked, and Charles Martel at Tours winning his victory that saved Europe from the domination of the crescent; you see, again, vast floods of armed men pouring east in the strange madness of the crusades, you see bands of children wandering across Europe led to death by madmen moved with the idea of taking the cross into the land of the followers of Mahomet, and you come down to today, when in the ancient battle grounds of Asia Minor, things are still unsettled and European nations are at daggers drawn, wishful to carve out new empires, and seize fresh lands for exploitation, not daring

to draw the sword lest the millions who owe allegiance to the True Prophet again arise in their might ready to die, because of all men they hold life light as compared with their faith.

There is a probability that if Charles Martel had not defeated the Mahometans at Tours, there would have been a mosque in London instead of St. Paul's cathedral. And if that had been the case, it is logical to hold that we would have been taught, and would today be busy instilling into our children the story of Mahomet's revolt against the praying to many gods. You can figure the way things would be, the books that would be written about the story of the camel driver; the tale of his revolt against the three hundred and sixty odd gods set up for worship; the tale of the stone that fell from Paradise when Adam was cast out; the legend of the wonderful stone that rose and sank, serving as a movable floor for father Abraham as he built the temple walls; the celestial light that flooded the world when the child Mahomet was born; the quenching of the sacred flame of Zoroaster that had burned for a thousand years when Mahomet first saw the light. Instead of the "Golden Legend" of Longfellow, we might have had a legend telling of the child Mahomet who could run about when he was seven months old, and at ten months could hold his own with bow and arrow against any child; who at nine months could not only talk, but was so filled with wisdom as to confound all who heard him. There would be poems on the

visit of the angels who took the three year old child, laid him on a couch and took out his heart, wringing from it the one black drop of original sin inherited from Adam, and returned it, filled with high resolve. For legends about Mahomet, and the prophets before him, are many, and the men of the desert, like other dreamers, have made fables sometimes fair and sometimes grotesque.

Still, in some ways and respects, the guiding rules for daily conduct would have been much the same as now. The shining thread of fair play is not confined to those of the Christian religion, and it has been well said that there is not a single noble sentiment or lofty aspiration in the New Testament that cannot be paralleled in one or another of the other scriptures of the world. For instance, take the Christian sentiments on brotherhood, you find, in the Mohammedan, as equally of value, this: "Be good to thy neighbor whether he be of your own people or a stranger." Take again the beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart," and compare it with the Mahommedan "A man's true wealth is the good he does in the world." Or in the matter of intellectual honesty we have in the Christian teaching, the injunction that we should "Put away living, speak every man the truth with his neighbor,' while the Mahommedan bids us, "Hide not the truth when you know it, clothe it not with falsehood."

There are others in plenty, commandments and adjurations, which are guides to conduct in every way satisfactory. Thus:

"Whatever is thy religion, associate with men who think differently from thee. If thou canst mix with them freely and are not angered at hearing them, thou hast attained peace and art a master of creation."

"Temperance is a tree which has contentment for its root and peace for its fruit."

"There is no safer guardian than Justice, no stronger sword than Right, no better ruler than Reason, no surer ally than Truth."

"When a man dies, his neighbors ask what property has he left behind him, but angels ask what good deeds has he sent on before him."

"If a man strike thee and in striking drop his staff, pick it up and hand it to him again. Let us be like trees which yield their fruit to those who throw stones at them."

Like so many strange geniuses, Mahomet was an epileptic. After a fit, he had visions, and after an apparition, he was a prey to melancholy. "An angel appears to me in human form; he speaks to me. Often, I hear, as it were, the sound of cats, of rabbits, of bells, then I suffer much." From *Le Journal des Savants*, October, 1863, we gain the information that after prophesying, he fell into a state of despondency. "Three *suras* of the Koran," he said to Abou-Bekr, "have been enough to whiten my hair." Said the writer, Morkos, "On Mahomet, the most contradictory verdicts may be pronounced, for it is impossible to deny his great excellence, while, at the same time there is no disguising the fact that we find

in him the most signal artifices of imposture, the grossest ignorance, and the greatest imprudence." Others have found it significant that in the Koran, there is no single chapter which has any connection with another, and in the course of a single sura, the ideas are often interrupted. But men of genius who have been subject to epilepsy in one form or another are by no means rare, and it is unsafe to base any theory on the latent forms of neurosis in genius. Consider Mozart, Paginini, Pascal, Handel, Flaubert, Petrarch, Dr. Johnson, Buffon, Caesar. Names of men similarly afflicted come thick and fast. So to the man's works.

The father of the lad died before his child's birth and his mother lived until Mahomet was seven years old. The grandfather, Abd-al-Muttalib, took charge of the orphan, but he too died a year later, upon which the boy was adopted by an uncle, Abu-Talib. The uncle was a poor man, and the boy had little or no education, spending the days herding sheep and tending camels. So things went quite uninterestingly until Mahomet was twenty-six years of age, when a wealthy widow named Khadija, fifteen years his senior, fell in love with the young man, and they were married. She bore him five children, (see appendix) was a sensible, business-like kind of woman who did not understand him perhaps, but nevertheless aided her strange husband, and to her Mahomet owed quite as much in the way of advancement and opportunity as Napoleon owed to his first wife. Certainly, in the days of Mahomet as in our own time, wealth made all the difference, and

the words of Mahomet, the camel driver, were much less effective than the words of Mahomet the husband of one of the most wealthy women in the place. For a time Mahomet made himself useful in his wife's business, becoming a kind of produce dealer, but it would seem that his trading abilities were not of the best, and the family fortune showed signs of diminishing rather than increasing.

Doubtless, there was a great deal of dreaming and ruminating on Mahomet's part, and he gained much curious information from his wife's cousin, one Waraka, who had translated parts of the old and the new testament into Arabic. Waraka, born a Jew, had turned Christian, and he was deeply interested in astrology and mysticism, even dabbled a little in the occult. Between Waraka and Mahomet, there grew up the idea that as time went on, religion became corrupted, became a mere outward form, and, here and there, figures arose who set themselves to restore it to its ancient purity. Pondering thus, Mahomet came to believe that the time was ripe for a purification: that the people had fallen from the worship of the one, true God, to idolatry. Long pondering had its effect. He became a solitary, indulging in fasting and prayer, and, at last, retired to the desert quiet in the holy month of the Arabs. Then, when he was forty years of age, came what he considered the great revelation. It was in the cave of Mount Hara. The angel Gabriel appeared before him, proclaiming him as Mahomet, the prophet of God, and showing him a silken cloth on which was written the

decree from heaven which formed the foundation of the Koran. You can imagine him then talking the affair over with Kadijah, she, with the eye of faith, accepting her husband as the chosen one. Then there was consultation with Waraka, the mystic, who was only too ready to believe. So there were three, and a new religion was born.

Zeid, a slave in the Mahomet household, was the first convert, and accepting his master as the true prophet of God, he gained his freedom. At the end of three years, there were forty converts, mostly young people and slaves, and the meetings were held in private, in households, or secretly in caves. Of course, there was persecution, without which no religion can grow, and meetings were broken up. In one rough and tumble fight, Saad, an armor maker, became the champion of the cause, wounding one of the rioters.

True to the wonder-seeking habits of humanity, there were calls for miracles. Some Moslem writers tell tales of magic: of the earth opening and jars of wine and honey coming forth, of doves dropping from heaven to whisper in Mahomet's ear, and of a bull coming to him in the presence of a multitude, bearing in its horns a scroll. But it is more likely that Mahomet never descended to tricks, and depended in the beginning upon reason for the promulgation of his teachings. Probably, a single manifestation of magic would have ended his career, for certainly there were not wanting those who had it in mind to do away with the heretic. There was once when the Koreishites,

who were his bitterest enemies, made an attack upon him and he was roughly handled. Then there were threats leveled at his family. So came the first flight, (or Hegira) when a little band of Mahometans, consisting of eleven men and four women, crossed to Abyssinia to take refuge with the Nestorian Christians. Others followed later, until, in the fifth year of Mahomet's mission there were eighty-three men, eighteen women and many children belonging to them, overseas, spreading the new evangel. Meanwhile, the Koreishites passed a law banishing all who chose to embrace the new religion. Mahomet, like a wise man, hid from the storm that he could in no wise control, and his seclusion lent a new charm, the charm of secrecy, to his teaching, so that converts went to him from all parts of Arabia. Persecution was an asset, as it ever is.

We pass over minor incidents, tales of how this one and that pledged to persecute or kill Mahomet were converted to the faith, how the decree of banishment against the Mahometans mysteriously disappeared and of how Mahomet returned to Mecca, to come to the death of Kadijah in her sixty-fifth year. A month later he was bethrothed to Ayesha, a child of seven years of age, the marriage being postponed for two years. To avoid loneliness during the years of the education of the child Ayesha, he married Sawda, the widow of one of his followers. Many other wives had Mahomet afterwards, but Ayesha remained the favorite, the only one, said Mahomet, who came a pure unspotted virgin to his arms.

But Mahomet's enemies were not idle, and so hot they pressed, that the prophet was forced to retire to the desert of Naklah. There, in his solitude, he had a strange vision, referred to in the seventy-second chapter of the Koran. The vision was of the genii, mighty beings sometimes evil, sometimes good: sometimes invisible, sometimes visible. Genii, according to the legend, were made from fire without smoke, as men were made from earth, and angels from precious stones. In the world of fantasy, there are no imaginary creatures more fascinating, and readers of the Arabian Nights will recall dozens of droll tales connected with them. Mahomet then, in his desert solitude was reading the Koran when he was overheard by a party of genii, who paused in their flight to listen. "Give ear," said one, and Mahomet continued to read. "Verily," said another, "we have heard an admirable discourse, which directeth unto the right institution; wherefore we believe therein." Thenceforth, Mahomet had it in mind to convert not only men, but genii as well. So there are references to the genii in the Koran in two passages, one to be found in the forty-sixth, and the other in the seventy-second chapter. (See appendix.)

The vision of the genii was followed by the traditional journey to the seventh heaven, in the course of which he was taken by the angel Gabriel to the presence of Allah and placed within two bow-shots of the Diety. (See Life of Mahomet, by Gagnier.) From Allah he re-

ceived instructions which were duly set down in the Koran.

But while things spiritually went very well with him, materially and politically the clouds were dark. Pilgrims from the town of Yathreb, afterwards Medina, who had heard Jews talk of the expected Messiah, took an interest in the strange figure in Mecca who preached on the hill Al-Akaba and he found many new followers. His new converts invited him to their city, and, pressure from his enemies at home being great, Mahomet made a pact, by the terms of which the people of Medina were to worship the one true God and be subject to Mahomet, His prophet, and in return, the prophet would make his home among them. But the enemies of the new religion were not idle and a plot to murder the heretic was hatched. The murderers surrounded the house where Mahomet lived, entered and made for the bed where he was known to be, to find, instead of Mahomet, his loyal supporter Ali. The myth-makers have had it that while the would-be murderers were at the door, Mahomet threw dust into the air, and, by a miracle, his enemies were blinded. To quote the thirtieth chapter of the Koran, "We have thrown blindness upon them that they shall not see." And again in the eighth chapter, "And call to mind how the unbelievers plotted against thee, that they might either detain thee in bonds or put thee to death, or expel thee from the city." The probability is that Mahomet slipped out of the back door after being warned. At any rate, Mahomet fled and reached Medina in

safety on what would correspond with the date of Sept. 20, 622, was received with joy by the citizens, and, a few days later, was joined by Ayesha. The flight is known as the Second Hegira, an outstanding feast in the Moslem year. Within the city, where the camel on which Mahomet rode first knelt, was built Mosjed al Nebi, the Mosque of the Prophet, at first a structure plain to severity, but later added to and adorned, until it became one of the famous buildings of the world, for its associations if not for its architectural splendor. As Islamism acknowledged Christ as one of the prophets, many Christians enrolled themselves under the banner of Mahomet.

II. THE FIGHT FOR SUPREMACY

It has been seen that one of the early precepts of Mahomet was the adjuration, "It is good to overcome evil with good, and it is evil to resist evil with evil." That is strikingly like the doctrine of nonresistance in the Christian, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," and "Do good to them that hate you." It is oddly at variance with the later Mahometan manifesto given at Medina, the world challenge which ran: "I the last of the prophets am sent with the sword. Let those who promulgate my faith enter into no argument or discussion, but slay all who refuse obedience to the law. Whoever fights for the true faith, whether he fall or conquer, will assuredly receive a glorious reward." And again,

"The sword is the key of heaven and hell; all who draw it in the cause of faith will be rewarded with temporal advantages; every drop shed of their blood, every hardship and peril endured by them, will be registered on high as more meritorious than even fasting or prayer. If they fall in battle their sins will at once be blotted out, and they will be transported to paradise, there to revel in eternal pleasures in the arms of black-eyed houris."

The change of front may possibly be attributed to Mahomet's pondering upon the dozen or more of years of ill-treatment accorded to him in Mecca. He saw a way of revenge, and he saw in his new allies the germ of a powerful force. The saint had passed into the warrior and the man whose head had been in the clouds, at last found his feet on the solid earth. Power was within his grasp and it was not long before he used it. Being the specially appointed spokesman of Allah, made things so much easier.

His first act of violence rocked the boat dangerously. By custom, in the holy month of Radjab, the desert might be traveled in safety, and pilgrims were safe from rapine and violence. A caravan of several camels laden with merchandise was attacked by one Abdallah under orders from Mahomet and the booty taken and blood shed. The act was a scandal that shook all Medina. No such desecration of the holy month had ever been heard of, nor was it until divine sanction was adduced from the Koran that Mahomet again sat secure. As

a clever stroke of policy, though one extremely childlike, Mahomet for a time pretended to be angered at his lieutenant Abdallah, but it was plainly a pretense. Still, the passage from the Koran was as oil on troubled waters, and it must be plain to the most careless that Allah was very specific. Judge for yourself:

"They will ask thee concerning the sacred month, whether they may make war therein. Answer: To war therein is grievous; but to deny God, to bar the path of God against his people, to drive true believers from his holy temple, and to worship idols, are sins far more grievous than to kill in the holy months."

It was now, in a fashion, Mecca against Medina—Mahomet versus his arch foe, Abu Sofian, and a chance for revenge and enrichment offered when Abu was known to be conducting a caravan of a thousand camels with a troop of thirty horsemen. So forth went the men of Mahomet three hundred and fourteen strong and they camped in a fertile valley by the brook Beder. Somehow, Abu Sofian got wind of the projected surprise and sent word to summon relief from Mecca. There was a wild drumming, and shouting, and calling, and in a short while a force of a hundred horses and seven hundred camels was under way. Meanwhile, the caravan changed its course. Down on Mahomet and his men swept the men from Mecca, and contrary to all expectation, the superior force was defeated, and the leader, Aby Jahl, slain. Looked at in soberness, one finds cause for the unexpected result in the

fact that the men from Mecca had crossed a desert, and animals, as well as men, were weary and athirst, while the force of Mahomet was well rested and refreshed. But it is curious to note that, as in the case of many fights waged for a religious cause as well as in some waged for mere national supremacy, there were heavenly hosts warring for one side. The fantastic story of the vision of Mons must be fresh in every reader's mind, and those who have found interest in the story of Jeanne d'Arc will recall the angelic knights arrayed with the Maid's army. So in the battle of Beder, three thousand celestial warriors mounted on white and black horses, swept like a whirlwind into the battle to the aid of Mahomet. There is reference to the incident in the third chapter of the Koran (see appendix). Tradesmen of lies there have been in all ages and in all climes, men who made a way by pretending mastery over mysterious powers that lured and wrought for good, and demoniac powers that worked evil in subtle manner.

The people of Medina were speedily won to fresh faith in Mahomet when the booty gained in the battle arrived, and new converts were many. Before long, an incident occurred that bred bad blood between Moslem and Jew, and led to the confiscation of Jewish owned property in Medina to the enrichment of the Mahometans. Taken by itself. it was a trivial incident, probably an act of rowdyism, but acts of rowdyism have often been made the excuse for far-reaching wrongs inflicted by the power-

ful on the weak. In the case in point, an Arab girl selling milk, her face veiled, as was the custom, was asked to unveil her face by a young Israelite. She, of course, refused, and the insult was as gross a one in the Arab eye as that would be were a young woman of our own place and time asked to unveil her breasts. As she sat, surrounded by her tormentors, a young merchant fastened the end of her veil to the bench, so that when she arose, her veil was torn off and her face revealed. Instantly, a fiery Moslem ran his sword through the young Jew. Then there was an uproar, men running from all quarters and taking sides, until what had been a foolish piece of impudence, turned into a town riot. Hearing of the tumult, down came Mahomet and his guards, the Jews were put to flight and ordered to embrace the Moslem faith or have their goods confiscated. The treasure that poured into the Mahometan coffers was considerable, and helped to defray the costs of many future little wars. The incident is another proof of the truth of the saying that there is no record of any party possessing power without abusing it.

Meanwhile, the people of Mecca were not idle. The memory of the Beder affair was active, and before long an armed force of three thousand were led forth by Abu Sofian. Somehow, Mahomet got wind of the affair and, hastily rallying some seven hundred men, he marched out of Medina to the hill of Ohod. It was probably a rough and tumble affair, with-

out order or effective discipline, and the troops of Mahomet were routed and fled to Medina. The Meccans did not follow up their victory and the only result was a truce for a year. Mahomet, losing in war for the first time, made up for it by winning in love, and took to himself another wife, his fifth. (See appendix.) Hend, his new spouse, was a widow of twenty-eight years of age. His fourth wife, to loop back a little, he had married after the affair resulting in the confiscation of the Jewish property. She, whose name was Hafza, was entrusted with the coffer containing the Koran writings as they were revealed to Mahomet from time to time.

To keep the people of Medina well content, there were raids from time to time on neighboring villages, and the booty was the cause of much discussion, probably due to the habit of gambling among the soldiery. So there was a revelation from heaven, and a new law was given for incorporation in the Koran, so that the use of wine and the playing of games of chance became forever prohibited.

Another revelation came very *a propos* in the case of Mahomet's next marriage, which followed hard on the heels of the union with Hend. Chancing to enter the house of his adopted son, Zeid, the prophet saw Zeinab, his son's newly wed wife, uncovered. At once he fell in love with the lady and declared his passion. The husband returning, was told what had passed, and, knowing the amorous nature of his foster father, he immediately divorced

Zeinab, who became the wife of Mahomet. Then arose much scandal and talk of incestuous unions, nor were the faithful contented until that revelation which forms the thirty-third chapter of the Koran was made public, when, learning that it was the desire of Allah that relatives by adoption should be sharply distinguished from relatives by blood, there was again quiet in the camp. The men who followed Mahomet were well trained to observe obedience to authority and must have been overwhelmed at the ease with which Mahomet made himself acquainted with the Divine will.

The eighth wife of Mahomet was met when he sallied against the tribe of Beni Mostalek and shortly after the marriage an unfortunate domestic affair was settled by an other revelation. It was in this wise. On a journey, Mahomet had taken Ayesha to bear him company, and, one evening, when encamping, it was found that the litter which was supposed to hold Ayesha was empty. Investigation showed that she had been left behind at the last camping place, and that a handsome young camel driver was also missing. Ayesha being found, told a story of having gone to look for a necklace at the moment of departure and being left behind by sheer misadventure. But whispering tongues can poison truth and things were said. The rumors reached the ears of Mahomet who consulted with his friend Ali. But Ali was something of a Job's comforter, telling Mahomet that such a misfortune was but the common lot of men. However, Ayesha

seems to have been wise in her generation, and, after the prophet had avoided her for a month, there was a meeting and a reconciliation. As for those who had suspected the innocence of Ayesha, for them there were fourscore scourges laid on their naked backs in a manner far from light, for the new revelation held that whoso accused a female of adultery without being able to produce four witnesses to testify to the fact, should be thus scourged. Had it not been for the revelation, the incident might well have proved a distressing calamity for Ayesha.

Abu Sofian was by no means an ordinary man During the year of truce, he formed a confederacy of the Arab tribes, welding with them the Jews expelled by Mahomet, and his gathered army numbered no less than ten thousand. With this force, he proposed to march on Medina. In the meantime, a converted Persian had taught Mahomet what to him was a new trick in warfare, and trenches were made. To the followers of Abu Sofian, trench warfare caused as much consternation as did the use of poison gas in the world war. To hide behind a trench seemed the essence of cowardice and so the two armies faced one another, neither daring to attack, flinging back and forth insults and challenges. In the end there was no bloodshed to speak of. A few minor assaults took place, but the would-be invaders eventually retired and Mahomet was left free to pursue his course.

Another marriage was consecrated shortly

after the trench victory, this time with a Jewess named Rihana, taken in a raid on the castle of Koraida, a Jewish stronghold, for Mahomet's dislike of the Jewish people increased with his success. A hint as to the cause of this antipathy is found in the last chapter of the Koran, where is to be read eleven verses supposed to be talismans against sorcery and witchcraft. Mahomet's untaught imagination and strangely susceptible nerves made him an easy victim sometimes, and the sorcerers of the day took advantage of his condition. He knew that there were daily prayers for his death and more than once he had narrowly escaped the hand of the assassin. But there came a time when he fell prey to some lingering ailment and lived oppressed by a sense of some mysterious overhanging cloud, so gradually, he came to the belief that he was the helpless victim of mysterious enchantments. At last there came news to him that certain Jewish dabblers in the black art were killing him in effigy. He heard that in some secret place in the mountains they had made a waxen image of him, wound it about with some of his hair and thrust it through with needles. About it they had also wound a bow string in which were tied eleven knots, each knot properly enchanted. The whole had then been cast into a well. But the angel Gabriel had revealed to him the secret and, at the same time, given him an amulet in the shape of the eleven verses above mentioned. The well was found, the effigy drawn up and laid out, and the eleven verses recited.

At each verse a knot in the bow string came loose and a needle slipped from the waxen figure, and at the end of the recitation, Mahomet arose, a strong and whole man once more. Of course, it is a story like so many more. We remember the glance of Medusa that turned men to stone; we recall Ulysses, the hair of Samson, the cup of Circe and even our own Nathaniel Hawthorne, suspicious that the misfortunes of his own family were due to some curse laid upon his ancestors for their activity in the Salem persecutions. The incident of the wax image has very little to do with the activities of the man Mahomet, but casts a strong side light upon his character.

Being well again, Mahomet undertook a religious pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca, and, in the holy month of Doul Kaada, set forth with a band of fourteen hundred men. At first the men of Mecca were suspicious of a ruse, but, examining and finding that the mission was peaceable, all went well and there was made between Mecca and Medina a truce of ten years, during which time all Mahometans were to have free access to Mecca as pilgrims, with the privilege of a three-day stay unmolested. The arrangement gave satisfaction to the people of Medina, and Mahomet was still further endeared to them because of his frequent expeditions to outlying castles and villages from which much plunder was gained. Meanwhile, there were missions to neighboring princes, to such as the king of Persia and the Roman emperor at Constantinople as well

as to the governor of Egypt. From the last named came friendly assurances and many gifts of value and beauty. Among the gifts was a beautiful Coptic maiden named Mariyah on whom the prophet cast an anxious eye. It was in his mind to make her a concubine at once, but he was deterred by the revelation found in the seventeenth chapter of the Koran, against the sin of adultery. Nor was there any satisfactory outcome until, by the greatest good fortune, a new revelation was given, by means of which intercourse with a handmaiden was permitted in the case of the chosen one of Allah alone. So all went well.

To finally free these pages of the matrimonial experinces of the prophet, let it be said that Mahomet took to himself another wife on his first trip to Mecca under the truce. This time the chosen one was a widow named Maimuna, fifty-one years of age. It was a marriage of policy, and because of it, new converts were gained from the tribe of the wife.

It is perfectly obvious that, in spite of truces and treaties, by no human possibility could an attempt upon the holy city of Mecca be avoided. Mecca had to become a Moslem town sooner or later. The crash came in the eighth year of the Hegira (and 630 A. D.) when Mahomet, at the head of an army of ten thousand, marched out to take the inevitable step. The attack was a complete surprise and Mecca fell, almost without bloodshed. Then came the heyday of Mahomet. Converts to the new faith came by tens of thousands, expeditions

against the unfaithful were numerous and resulted in the gaining of much booty, and, in a short time, Mahomet was master of all Arabia and the warring and scattered tribes were solidly united in a kind of confederacy. In one year Mahomet's army grew from ten to thirty thousand.

With growing power, the moderation of the young Mahomet passed away. Ali, the favorite of Mahomet, was appointed a kind of deputy, and, on occasion, was despatched to carry news of new revelations to assemblages gathered in distant places. It was, henceforth, to be the sword and not the word. Unbelievers were allowed four months to ponder matters, after which all indulgence would cease. Holy months and holy places were for the faithful alone. As for the rest, for them it was acceptance of the faith or confiscation of property. The ties of blood and friendship were to be as naught. In short, the new faith was dominant and dominant its head intended it to remain. Comparing the early benignity of Mahomet with his ferocity when in power, one is reminded of the humorous philosopher, Mr. Dunne, who put into the mouth of his character, Mr. Dooley, a remark to the effect that it was exceedingly fortunate that religious enthusiasts were rarely sent to Congress where they could exercise their power. "Whin they're calm," he said, "they'd wipe out all the laws, an' whin they're excited, they'd wipe out all the population. They're never two jumps from the thumb screw.' So Mahomet in power

abandoned the practice of non-resistance and announced to his followers that there was a better way, advising them that "when the months wherein ye are not allowed to attack them, (the unregenerate), shall be passed, kill the idolatrous wherever ye shall find them, or take them prisoners; besiege them, or lay in wait for them." So, naturally, there was a fresh influx of converts and once more in the history of the world civil government borrowed a strength from ecclesiastical, and artificial laws and expediency measures received a sanction from revelations. At the age of sixty-three, Mahomet was a power in the eastern world and had founded a nation that was to spread onward and outward until it offered a serious obstacle to nations of another faith even in our own day. Nor did he meet serious opposition until the last days of his life when two opposition prophets arose to dispute his authority, the one, Al Aswad, the other, Moseilma. The first named seems to have been a weak imitation of Mahomet, who imposed upon the Arabs in his own vicinity with pretended miracles and frequent revelations. He was despatched by the dagger of an assassin. The second pretender was a man of some ability who set about composing a Koran of his own. Like Alexander I of Russia, who had a mind to ally his forces with those of Napoleon to the end that the pair of them might rule the earth, he made no effort to usurp the authority of Mahomet, but instead, proposed an alliance. So he forwarded to the ruler a letter.

"From Moseilma, the prophet of Allah, to Mahomet the prophet of Allah! Come now, and let us make a partition of the world, and let half be thine and half be mine."

To which Mahomet, engrossed in the plans for an invasion of Syria, made reply, quite characteristically:

"From Mahomet, the prophet of God, to Moseilma the Liar! The earth is the Lord's, and he giveth it as an inheritance to such of his servants as find favor in his sight. Happy shall those be who live in his fear."

LAST DAYS

So, in the eleventh year of his fight, a great army was fitted out for the invasion of Syria and the command given to Osama, a lad of twenty years of age, the son of Zeid, Mahomet's first convert. One day only the army marched when a halt was made on account of Mahomet's serious sickness. In a few hours the prophet was dead, his religion without a recognized exponent, his nation without a chief. Under such circumstances, most human institutions would have gone to pieces in short order, the gathered army resolving itself into warring factions. But it was not so in the case of Islam. For a short time there threatened to be ruptures, but young Osama with Omar, the friend of Mahomet, declared for Abu Beker, the father of Ayesha who assumed the title of

Caliph. Thus it was that the new line of rulers started in the person of a man well over sixty years of age.

AFTER MAHOMET

The first sign of revolt against the new head of the nation came when some of the Arabian tribes whose conversion had been effected by the sword, refused to pay the taxes, and as the collection of a tax depends upon the attitude of the taxpayer, trouble loomed. Seizing upon the time of change, the self-styled prophet Moseilma also gathered together his followers. But in the army gathered by Mahomet, there was one, Khaled Ibn Waled, a soldier to the core, and him the Caliph Abu Beker chose to restore order. Finding that the revolting tribes had accepted as their leader a man of merit named Malec, Khaled marched against him with four thousand five hundred men. The united tribes were defeated and Malec made prisoner.

"Why," asked Khaled of Malec, "do you refuse the tax?"

"Because I can pray without paying taxes," was the sensible answer.

"But prayer without taxes is of little use," responded the utilitarian Khaled.

There was further argument, Malec sticking to his point, but Khaled was no man of words. A sign was given and a scimitar flashed, and Malec's head fell to the earth. Without delay, Khaled marched against the men under Moseilma, meeting them at Akreba. Twenty-

five hundred men fell in the engagement and the man who wanted to share the earth with Mahomet was killed. So order was restored, the waverers brought back into the fold, and Abu Beker left free to convert the world to Islam.

Forward then into Syria, into Persia and towards Damascus went the army, and a campaign commenced that was brilliant in the extreme. Booty was sent back to Medina as city after city fell, and men in thousands flocked to the banners of the victorious armies. Mesopotamia was overrun and the people seem to have been perfectly unconcerned whether exactions were imposed upon them by conquerors from Byzantium or Arabia. The one plain fact stood out that they had to pay under whichever banner they toiled. So there seems to have been but little resistance.

Khaled was the soldier hero and his taking of Damascus is a story which Voltaire has said compared with the tale of the siege of Troy. It is a tale of bravery on the part of both besieged and besiegers, of strange, daring sallies, of fighting women, of dramatic parleys and hand to hand combats of great ferocity, and the glittering booty that went back to Medina meant new strength for the army. But on the day of the fall of Damascus, the wise Caliph and friend of Khaled breathed his last at Medina, so, for the soldier, the joy of victory was lost in that he could not hand the glory of it to his master. On his deathbed, Abu Beker named as his successor Omar Ibn al Khatteb, a man of austere piety and great simplicity.

The new Commander of the Faithful had never approved of the high-handed, daring measures of Khaled, and his first official act was to recall him as head of the army and to substitute the milder Abu Obeidah. It is to the great credit of Khaled that, with an army at his back by which he was adored, he surrendered his office without a word, proclaiming himself to be one equally willing to serve as to command. The clemency of Abu Obeidah too wrought for the good of Islam, for, with the stopping of the river of blood, conquered peoples welcomed the new faith as less oppressive than the old.

World history does not record any such marvelous over-powering of other nations as that accomplished by the followers of Mahomet. Six years after the death of the prophet, Asia Minor was subject and the Euphrato-Tigris valley had fallen under Moslem rule. In 641 A. D. Persia was dominated by the Caliph, and India was completely conquered later.

Westward, the Delta of Egypt was first attacked, then Cairo was taken, and, after a siege of fourteen months, Alexandria fell. What Alexandria was, we can but guess. Certainly the letter of Amru, the commander, to the Caliph, shows it to have been, in the eyes of the frugal Arabs at least, a place of great magnificence. Amru's letter lists as being in the city, four thousand palaces, five thousand baths, four hundred theatres and twelve thousand gardeners to keep the inhabitants supplied with vegetables. Gibbon regards the tale of the destruction of the Alexandrian library as resting on unsafe foundation, but the historian

Abulpharagius records it and the destruction is generally credited. If true, then the record of much that is lost to us forever has vanished for all time, for two hundred thousand volumes certainly were in one building, the library which Marc Anthony gave to Cleopatra. What number of books and manuscripts were in other buildings will never be known, but it has been told that on the order of the Caliph, the books having been distributed among the five thousand baths of the city, six months was taken to burn them.

Certainly, judging from the spoiling of the Persian capital of Madayn, there is little cause to doubt otherwise than wondrous treasures would be sacrificed. For at that unfortunate city, no traces were left of the wonderful palace with its audience hall, the ceiling of which resembled the sky, with planets and stars in motion; nothing was left in the vaults where were vast treasures of gold and silver and precious stones and spices; the wonderful silken carpet made for the king, designed in imitation of a garden with emeralds set so as to form leaves, and pearls and rubies and sapphires arranged in the form of flowers; the much-written-of throne set on silver pillars above which was suspended with golden chains the kingly crown; no traces were left. It is easy to credit the destruction of the Alexandrian library then. "The contents of the books," said Omar the Caliph, "are in conformity with the Koran, or they are not. If they are not, they are pernicious and should be destroyed. If they are in conformity with

the Koran, then they are not needed, for the Koran is all sufficient."

In their westward course, the conquerors took Tripoli, Carthage and Tangier and the authority of the Greeks vanished over the whole of northern Africa to the Atlantic. Up north into Spain they swept and in less than three years the whole of Spain was subject to Moslem rule.

As might be expected, there was an invasion of France, and the Moslem victors marched northwards until they encamped on the banks of the Loire. And there it was that one of the decisive battles of the world was fought in 732 A. D., decisive, because the victory had far-reaching results, turning the tide of invasion southward again. The man who led the opposing forces was Charles Martel, afterwards founder of the Carlovingian dynasty and grandfather of Charlemagne. For six days he conducted a campaign against the Moors, skirmishing and attacking, then there was a final and concerted attack and three hundred thousand Moslems were left dead on the field.

Only once, strangely enough, was there an attempt made on the part of the Christian forces to invade Moorish Spain. It was under Charlemagne that the raid was attempted and the year of it was 777 A. D. Little was gained by the attempt, and the Franks were recalled by news of the invasion of France by the Saxons.

The continuance of Moorish rule in France was made easily possible by the fact that the people of the country found the Moslem an

easier taskmaster than the Goth. The Mahometan had established a fairly equitable system of taxation, and, while the civilization was one based upon slavery, freedom was comparatively easy to obtain, the main requirement apparently being a confession of faith and a repetition of the formula to a reputable Mahometan that "There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his Prophet." Then, too, Arabian activity in the way of public improvements counted for much. Just as in Egypt, Amru, the conqueror, dug a canal of communication from the Nile to the Red sea, a distance of eighty miles, by which provisions might be conveyed to the Arabian shores, so in Spain, the country was improved by the making of roads, bridges, canals and aqueducts. Then, too, learning was encouraged and shipbuilding and commerce fostered. The city of Cordova was the European center of learning under Moslem rule. "Hither," writes the Arab historian El Marrary, "came from all parts of the world students eager to cultivate poetry, to study the sciences, or to be instructed in divinity or law; so that it became the meeting place of the eminent in all matters, the abode of the learned, and the place of resort for the studious."

It it well to remember that while dwelling upon the warrior activities of the Arabs, a kind of impression arises of a people caring for nothing but conquest and rapine, that impression should be always balanced by the remembrance of the strange culture of the same people. Mahomet's insistence upon the Koran as final by no means bound his followers

Mahomet had not been dead a hundred years before Arabic literature was enriched with translations of the world's great works, the Iliad and the Odyssey. Caliph after Caliph had done something towards setting learning on firm footing. Almansor (Caliph 753-775 A. D.) had established schools of medicine and law: Haroun-al-Raschid had ordered that to every mosque a school should be attached (786 A. D.) and Al-Manun (Caliph 813-832 A. D.) made Bagdad the center of science and collected great libraries. At Cairo, the Fatimite Library founded by Caliph Al-Manun contained a hundred thousand volumes and six thousand five hundred manuscripts on astronomy and medicine alone. In Spain there were no less than seventy public libraries founded by the Moorish conquerors and not only were there volumes for public reading on history, politics and philosophy, but also what we would call pedigree lists of famous horses and camels to the end that the breed might be kept pure.

I quote Gibbon in his reference to the patronage of learning among the Mahometans: "The same royal prerogative was claimed by the independent emirs of the provinces, and their emulation diffused the taste and the rewards of science from Samarcand and Bokkara to Fez and Cordova. The visier of a sultan consecrated a sum of two hundred thousand pieces of gold to the foundation of a college at Bagdad, which he endowed with an annual revenue of fifteen thousand dinars. The fruits of instruction were communicated, perhaps, at different times, to six thousand disciples of

every degree, from the son of the noble to that of the mechanic; a sufficient allowance was provided for the indigent scholars, and the merit or industry of the professors was repaid with adequate stipends. In every city the productions of Arabic literature were copied and collected by the curiosity of the studious and the vanity of the rich."

And, as an evidence of Moslem viewpoint as to the value of learning, mark the words of Caliph Al-Mamun who declared that "they are the elect of God, his best and most useful servants, whose lives are devoted to the improvement of their rational faculties; that the teachers of wisdom are the true luminaries and legislators of this world, which, without their aid, would again sink into ignorance and barbarism."

Learning then became the rule. From India the Arabs brought the present numeral system. Algebra was developed from the early beginnings laid down by Diophantus. We owe the solution of quadratic equations as well as cubic equations to Mahomet Ben Musa and Omar Ben Ibrahim respectively. Under the Saracens trigonometry grew to its present form. It was through the Arabs that the people of Europe learned to play chess, and their romances gave a trend to our present day literature. Our ideas of evolution were not the first. (See appendix.) The Arabs were taught something of the kind by Al-Khazini. As for astronomy, the names given to the celestial bodies by them are those that we use today. They had calculated the size of the earth, determined the

obliquity of the orbit, fixed the length of the year and verified the precession of the equinoxes. In chemistry they were far advanced, having discovered the properties of sulphuric acid, nitric acid and alcohol. In mechanics they anticipated Newton's discovery and touched upon the Einstein theory, or the beginnings of it, when Al-Hazen made the discovery of the curvilinear path of a ray of light.

As for agriculture, the world will not overlook the fact that the Arabs introduced superior methods of irrigation, that they understood the skilful employment of manures, the improved breeding of horses and camels, the culture of rice, sugar and coffee. In the world of manufacture, their activity is shown in the making of leather, silk, wool and cotton goods and sword blades of superb temper.

THE RETREAT FROM EUROPE

As the Christian states grew in power, the Moslem holdings were reduced. In the latter part of the thirteenth century the only portion of what is now Spain that was left to the Moors was the province of Granada. The Christian forces took Toledo in 1085 and then fell in turn Saragossa, Valencia, Seville and Murcia, so that the Mahometan stronghold became the city of Granada. To protect that from the invader, a double circuit of walls was built. The city itself was one of great grandeur with its fortress and palace, its thousand towers and its famous Alhambra, "the finest home ever

inhabited by a Moslem monarch." (Alhambra—see Appendix.) A picture of the last patch of Moslem territory is given by Sir W. S. Maxwell, too long to quote in its entirety, but contracted in the passage that follows, giving its salient points. "Through the glens a number of streams pour the snows of Muley-Hacen and the Pic de Valeta into the Mediterranean. In natural beauty, and in many physical advantages, this mountain land is one of the most lovely and delightful regions of Europe. . . . When thickly peopled with laborious Moors, the narrow glens bottomed with rich soil, were terraced and irrigated with a careful industry, which compensated for want of space. The villages were surrounded with vineyards and gardens, orange and almond orchards, and plantations of olive and mulberry. . . . The wine and the fruit, the silk and the oil, the cheese and the wool, were famous in the markets of Granada and the seaports of Andalusia."

But all that was doomed to pass. King Ferdinand of Spain having married Isabella, there was a union of divided houses and the united Christian forces surrounded the city, blockaded it for eight months until the governor, Abu-Abdallah, surrendered and the Moorish foothold in Europe was ended, 1492 A. D.

The End

APPENDIX

PASSAGE FROM CHAPTER 72 OF THE KORAN, ON GENII.

Mahomet, in the seventy-second chapter of the Koran alludes to the visitation of the genii in the valley of Naklan, making them give the following frank account of themselves:

"We formerly attempted to pry into what was transacted in heaven, but we found the same guarded by angels with flaring darts; and we sat on some of the seats thereof to hear the discourse of its inhabitants; but who so listeneth now finds a flame prepared to guard the celestial confines. There are some among us who are Moslems, and there are others who swerve from righteousness. Whoso embraces Islamism seeketh the true direction; but those who swerve from righteousness shall be fuel for the fire of Jehennam."

THE ARAB IDEA OF EVOLUTION

"When common people," says Khazini, writing in the twelfth century, "hear from natural philosophers that gold is a body which has attained to perfection of maturity, to the goal of completeness, they firmly believe that it is something which has gradually come to that perfection by passing through the forms of all other metallic bodies, so that its gold nature

was originally lead, afterwards it became tin, then brass, then silver, and finally reached the development of gold; not knowing that the natural philosophers mean, in saying this, only something what they mean when they speak of man, and attribute to him a completeness and equilibrium in nature and constitution—not that man was once a bull, and was changed into an ass, afterwards into a horse, and after that into an ape, and finally became a man."

ELEVEN VERSES ENTITLED THE AMULETS, CONSIDERED AS TALISMANS AGAINST MAGIC CHARMS

In the name of the all-merciful God! I will fly for refuge to the Lord of the light of day.

That he may deliver me from the danger of beings and things created by himself.

From the dangers of the darksome night, and the moon when in eclipse.

From the danger of sorcerers, who tie knots and blow on them with their breath.

From the danger of the envious, who devise deadly harm.

I will fly for refuge to Allah, the Lord of men.

To Allah, the King of men.

To Allah, the God of men.

That he may deliver me from the evil spirit who flies at the mention of his holy name.

Who suggests evil thoughts into the hearts of the children of men.

And from the evil genii and men who deal in magic.

A VISIT TO HEAVEN

In the mid-watches of the night Mahomet was roused by a voice, crying, "Awake, thou sleeper!" The angel Gabriel stood before him. His forehead was clear and serene, his complexion as white as snow, his hair floated on his shoulders; he had wings of many dazzling hues, and his robes were sown with pearls and embroidered with gold.

He brought Mahomet a white steed of wonderful form and qualities, unlike any animal he had ever seen; and in truth it differs from any animal ever before described. It had a human face, but the cheeks of a horse; its eyes were as jacinths and radiant as stars. It had eagle's wings all glittering with rays of light; and its whole form was resplendent with gems and precious stones. It was a female, and from its dazzling splendor and incredible velocity was called Al Borak, or Lightning.

Mahomet prepared to mount this supernatural steed, but as he extended his hand, it drew back and reared.

"Be still, oh Borak!" said Gabriel; "respect the prophet of God. Never wert thou mounted by mortal man more honored of Allah."

"Oh, Gabriel!" replied Al Borak, who at this time was miraculously endowed with speech; "did not Abraham of old, the friend of God, bestride me when he visited his son Ishmael? Oh Gabriel! is this not the mediator, the intercessor, the author of the profession of faith?"

"Even so Borak, this is Mahomet Ibn Abdal-

lah, of one of the tribes of Arabia the Happy, and of the true faith. He is chief of the sons of Adam, the greatest of the divine legates, the seal of the prophets. All creatures must have his intercession before they can enter paradise. Heaven is on his right hand, to be the reward of those who believe in him; the fire of Jehennam is on his left hand, into which all shall be thrust who oppose his doctrines."

"Oh Gabriel!" entreated Al Borak; "by the faith existing between thee and him, prevail on him to intercede for me at the day of resurrection."

"Be assured, oh Borak!" exclaimed Mahomet, "that through my intercession thou shalt enter paradise."

No sooner had he uttered these words than the animal approached and submitted to be mounted, then rising with Mahomet on his back, it soared aloft far above the mountains of Mecca.

As they passed like lightning between heaven and earth, Gabriel cried aloud, "Stop, oh Mahomet! descend to the earth, and make the prayer with two inflections of the body."

They alighted on the earth, and having made the prayer—"Oh friend and well-beloved of my soul," said Mahomet, "Why dost thou command me to pray in this place?"

"Because it is Mount Sinai, on which God communed with Moses."

Mounting aloft, they again passed rapidly between heaven and earth, until Gabriel called out a second time, "Stop, oh Mahomet! descend and make prayer with two inflections."

They descended, Mahomet prayed, and again demanded, "Why didst thou command me to pray in this place?"

"Because it is Bethlehem, where Jesus the son of Mary was born."

They resumed their course through the air, until a voice was heard on the right exclaiming "Oh Mahomet, tarry a moment, that I may speak to thee; of all created beings I am most devoted to thee."

But Borak pressed forward, and Mahomet forbore to tarry, for he felt that it was not with him to stay his course, but with God the all-powerful and glorious.

Another voice was now heard on the left, calling on Mahomet in like words to tarry; but Borak still pressed forward, and Mahomet tarried not. He now beheld before him a damsel of ravishing beauty, adorned with all the luxury and riches of the earth. She beckoned him with luring smiles: "Tarry a moment, oh Mahomet, that I may talk with thee. I, who, of all beings, am the most devoted to thee."

But still Borak pressed on, and Mahomet tarried not; considering that it was not with him to stay his course, but with God the all-powerful and glorious.

Addressing himself, however, to Gabriel, "What voices are those I have heard?" said he; "and what damsel is this who has beckoned to me?"

"The first, oh Mahomet, was the voice of a Jew: hadst thou listened to him, all thy nation would have been won to Judaism.

"The second was the voice of a Christian;

hadst thou listened to him, thy people would have inclined to Christianity.

"The damsel was the world, with all its riches, its vanities, and allurements; hadst thou listened to her, thy nation would have chosen the pleasure of this life, rather than the bliss of eternity, and all would have been doomed to perdition."

Continuing their aerial course, they arrived at the gate of the holy temple of Jerusalem, where, alighting from Al Borak, Mahomet fastened her to the rings where the prophets before him had fastened her. Then entering the temple he found there Abraham, and Moses, and Isa (Jesus), and many more of the prophets. After he had prayed in the company of them for a time, a ladder of light was let down from heaven, until the lower end rested on the Shakra, or foundation stone of the sacred house, being the stone of Jacob. Aided by the angel Gabriel, Mahomet ascended this ladder with the rapidity of lightning.

Being arrived at the first heaven, Gabriel knocked at the gate. Who is there? was demanded from within. Gabriel. Who is with thee? Mahomet. Has he received his mission? He has. Then he is welcome! and the gate was opened.

This first heaven was of pure silver; and in its resplendent vault the stars are suspended by chains of gold. In each star an angel is placed sentinel, to prevent the demons from scaling the sacred abodes. As Mahomet entered an ancient man approached him, and Gabriel said, "Here is thy father Adam, pay him rever-

ence." Mahomet did so, and Adam embraced him, calling him the greatest of his children, and the first among the prophets.

In this heaven were innumerable animals of all kinds, which Gabriel said were angels, who, under these forms, interceded with Allah for the various races of animals upon earth. Among these was a cock of dazzling whiteness, and of such marvelous height that his crest touched the second heaven, through five hundred years' journey above the first. This wonderful bird saluted the ear of Allah each morning with his melodious chant. All creatures on earth, save man, are awakened by his voice, and all the fowls of his kind chant hallelujahs in emulation of his note.

They now ascended to the second heaven. Gabriel as before, knocked at the gate; the same questions and replies were exchanged; the door opened and they entered.

This heaven was all of polished steel and dazzling splendor. Here they found Noah, who, embracing Mahomet, hailed him as the greatest among the prophets.

Arrived at the third heaven, they entered with the same ceremonies. It was all studded with precious stones, and too brilliant for mortal eyes. Here was seated an angel of immeasurable height, whose eyes were seventy thousand days' journey apart. He had at his command a hundred thousand battalions of armed men. Before him was spread a vast book, in which he was continually writing and blotting out.

"This, oh Mahomet," said Gabriel, "is Asrael, the angel of death, who is in the confidence of Allah. In the book before him he is continually writing the names of those who are to be born, and blotting out the names of those who have lived their allotted time, and who, therefore, instantly die."

They now mounted the fourth heaven, formed of finest silver. Among the angels who inhabited it was one five hundred days' journey in height. His countenance was troubled, and rivers of tears ran from his eyes. "This," said Gabriel, "is the angel of tears, appointed to weep over the sins of the children of men, and to predict the evils which await them."

The fifth heaven was of finest gold. Here Mahomet was received by Aaron with embraces and congratulations. The avenging angel dwells in this heaven, and presides over the element of fire. Of all the angels seen by Mahomet, he was the most hideous and terrific. His visage seemed of copper, and was covered with wens and warts. His eyes flashed lightning, and he grasped a flaming lance. He sat on a throne surrounded by flames, and before him was a heap of red-hot chains. Were he alighted upon earth in his true form, the mountains would be consumed, the seas dried up, and all the inhabitants would die with terror. To him, and the angels his ministers, is intrusted the execution of divine vengeance on infidels and sinners.

Leaving this awful abode, they mounted to the sixth heaven, composed of a transparent stone, called Hasala, which may be rendered

carbuncle. Here was a great angel, composed half of snow and half of fire; yet the snow melted not, nor was the fire extinguished. Around him a choir of lesser angels continually exclaimed, "Oh, Allah! who hast united snow and fire, unite all thy faithful servants in obedience to thy law."

"This," said Gabriel, "is the guardian angel of heaven and earth. It is he who dispatches the angels into individuals of thy nation, to incline them in favor of thy mission and call them to the service of God; and he will continue to do so until the day of resurrection."

Here was the prophet Musa (Moses), who, however, instead of welcoming Mahomet with joy, as the other prophets had done, shed tears at sight of him.

"Wherefore dost thou weep?" inquired Mahomet. "Because I behold a successor who is destined to conduct more of his nation into paradise than ever I could of the backsliding children of Israel."

Mounting hence to the seventh heaven, Mahomet was received by the Patriarch Abraham. This blissful abode is formed of divine light, of such transcendent glory that the tongue of man cannot describe it. One of its celestial inhabitants will suffice to give an idea of the rest. He surpassed the whole earth in magnitude, and had seventy thousand heads; each head seventy thousand mouths; each mouth seventy thousand tongues; each tongue spoke seventy thousand languages, and all these were incessantly employed in chanting the praises of the Most High.

While contemplating this wonderful being Mahomet was suddenly transported aloft to the lotus-tree, called Sedrat, which flourishes on the right hand of the invisible throne of Allah. The branches of this tree extend wider than the distance between the sun and the earth. Angels more numerous than the sands of the seashore, or of the beds of all the streams and rivers, rejoice beneath its shade. The leaves resemble the ears of an elephant; thousands of immortal birds sport among its branches, repeating the sublime verse of the Koran. Its fruits are milder and sweeter than honey. If all the creatures of God were assembled, one of these fruits would be sufficient for their sustenance. Each seed encloses a houri, or celestial virgin, provided for the felicity of true believers. From this tree issues four rivers; two flow into the interior of paradise, two issue beyond it, and become the Nile and Euphrates.

Mahomet and his celestial guide now proceeded to Al Mamour, or the House of Adoration, formed of red jacinths or rubies, and surrounded by innumerable lamps, perpetually burning. As Mahomet entered the portal, three vases were offered him, one containing wine, another milk, and the third honey. He took and drank of the vase containing milk.

"Well hast thou done; auspicious is thy choice," exclaimed Gabriel. "Hadst thou drunk of the wine, thy people had all gone astray."

The sacred house resembles in form the Caaba at Mecca, and is perpendicularly above it in the seventh heaven. It is visited every

day by seventy thousand angels of the highest order. They were at this very time making their holy circuit, and Mahomet, joining with them, walked around it seven times.

Gabriel could go no further. Mahomet now traversed, quicker than thought, an immense space; passing through two regions of dazzling light, and one of profound darkness. Emerging from this utter gloom, he was filled with awe and terror at finding himself in the presence of Allah, and but two bow shots from his throne. The face of the Deity was covered with twenty thousand veils, for it would have annihilated man to look upon its glory. He put forth his hands, and placed one upon the breast and the other upon the shoulder of Mahomet, who felt a freezing chill penetrate to his heart and to the very marrow of his bones. It was followed by a feeling of ecstatic bliss, while a sweetness and fragrance prevailed around, which no one can understand but those who have been in the divine presence.

Mahomet now received from the Deity himself many of the doctrines contained in the Koran; and fifty prayers were prescribed as the daily duty of all true believers.

When he descended from the divine presence and again met with Moses, the latter demanded what Allah had required. "That I should make fifty prayers every day."

"And thinkest thou to accomplish such a task? I have made the experiment before thee. I tried it with the children of Israel, but in vain, return, then, and beg a diminution of the task."

Mahomet returned accordingly, and obtained a diminution of ten prayers; but when he related his success to Moses, the latter made the same objection to the daily amount of forty. By his advice Mahomet returned repeatedly, until the number was reduced to five.

Moses still objected. "Thinkest thou to exact five prayers daily from thy people? By Allah! I have had experience with the children of Israel, and such a demand is vain; return therefore and entreat still further mitigation of the task."

"No," returned Mahomet, "I have already asked indulgence until I am ashamed." With these words he saluted Moses and departed.

By the Ladder of Light he descended to the temple of Jerusalem, where he found Borak fastened as he had left her, and mounting, was borne back in an instant to the place whence he had been taken. (Adapted from Washington Irving.)

THE ALHAMBRA

On a hill in the city of Granada, a principal town in the Spanish providence of Andalusia, stands an extensive fortress known as the Alhambra, or "the red castle." It is the old citadel of the town, and was built by the Moors when they were the masters of Spain. Designed for warlike and defensive purposes only, it has no pretentions to architectural grandeur or effect. Its walls, which average thirty feet in height and six feet in thickness, are irregular

in form, and composed chiefly of loose stones cemented together, and faced with a plaster coat. The area enclosed by this fortress is very extensive. It is like a town in itself, having its streets, its church, its convent; and is said in its palmy days to have afforded accommodation to a garrison of 40,000 men.

Plain and rugged as is this structure in external appearance, it is the casket which holds one of the richest gems of the architecture of any age or time. Within its walls are enclosed the remains of the Moorish palace to which the name of Alhambra is generally applied, although it belongs properly to the fortress itself. This palace was built in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and all the beauty and ingenuity of Arabic art were lavished upon its construction. Upon the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, it occasionally became the residence of the Christian sovereign, and Charles V. designed to place by its side another palace, which should eclipse the glories of the art of the infidel Moor. But this building, although it was commenced, and some very fine portions of it are still in existence, was never completed. Its fragments were suffered to decay when Granada grew in disfavor as a residence with the Spanish monarchs, and, when compared with the remains of the Moorish palace, they now show to great disadvantage; the contrast between the two styles of art and the nature of workmanship in each is greatly in favor of the Moors. "The walls of the Christian edifice," says one writer, "are defaced, the paintings faded, the woodwork is decayed, and

festoons of cobwebs are seen hanging from the ceiling. In the work of the Arabs, on the contrary. the walls remain unaltered, except by the injuries inflicted by the hands of men. The color of the paintings, in which there is no mixture of oil, on removing the particles of dust, appear to have preserved their brightness. The beams and wood-work of the ceilings present no signs of decay; no spiders, flies, or other insects are to be seen there. The art of rendering timber and paint durable, and of making porcelain mosaics, arabesques, and other ornaments, began and ended in Western Europe with the Moorish conquerors of Spain."

The remains of the palace of Alhambra consist of entrance arches, corridors, and courts constructed chiefly of marble, richly adorned with arabesques. The Arabs were forbidden by their religion to use the representation of living figures or animals in their ornamental devices, which therefore took the shape of flowers and geometrical forms, sometimes very fanciful in their nature. The term *arabesque* was applied to this class of ornament, after the race by which it was chiefly used. These arabesque ornaments were cast in moulds, and joined in such extreme nicety that frequently no trace of the point of junction can be detected. They were colored in blue, red, and gold, and the general effect in such edifices as the Alhambra is so gorgeous that it cannot be realized by description.

The salon known as the Hall of the Abencerrages must be noted, with its beautiful stalac-

tite roof, composed of 5,000 separate pieces, fitting into each other with the greatest exactitude. The hall takes its name from a Moorish family, the last members of which were treacherously murdered in this chamber. A mark, said to have been left by their blood, is pointed out upon the marble floor, but sceptical people in later times have declared that it is nothing but the deposit of water impregnated with iron.

SEVEN IMPORTANT DATES IN THE LIFE OF MAHOMET

Mahomet born at Mecca.....569 or 570
Announced himself as a prophet..... 612
Fled from his enemies to Medina (the Hegira) 622
Defeats his enemies (the Koreish).....623-5
Defeats the Christians (battle of Muta).... 629
Mahomet acknowledged as sovereign..... 630
Death of Mahomet. June 8..... 632

IMPORTANT DATES RELATING TO THE PROGRESS OF MAHOMETANISM

Mahometan progress in France stopped at the battle of Tours, Charles Martel leader of the defenders..... 732
Summarized account of Mahometan activities after Tours: The Mahometan Arans, termed Saracens, conquered Arabia, North Africa, and part of Asia in the 7th century; in the 8th century they invaded Europe, conquering Spain, where they founded the caliphate of Cordova, which lasted until.....1031

The Caliphate of Cordova was broken up into smaller governments, the last of which. the kingdom of Granada, endured until its subjugation by Ferdinand in 1492

The Moorish Mahometans were finally expelled from Spain in.....1609

RECORD IN BRIEF OF THE EIGHT CRUSADES

I. Crusade of 1095 ended by Jerusalem being taken by assault and Godfrey of Bouillon made king.....1099

II. Crusade preached by St. Bernard in 1146. headed by Emperor Conrad II and Louis VII of France: Crusaders beaten and Jerusalem taken by Saracens 1187

III. Barbarossa crusade .....1189 to 1192

IV. Crusade by Emperor Henry VI..... .....1202 to 1204

V. Crusade by Innocent III....1218 to 1221

VI. Barbarossa obtained possession of Jerusalem 1229

VII. Crusade by Louis IX.....1248 He was defeated and taken prisoner at Mansourah, April 5, 1250, released by ransom and there was a truce of ten years.

VIII. Last crusade by Louis IX.....1270 Christians driven out of Syria.....1291

DATES RELATING TO THE KORAN

(*Al-coran of Al-Kuran*).

Written by Mahomet..... 610
Published by Abu-Becker..... 635
Translated into Latin.....1143
Translated into French.....1647
Translated into English by Sale.....1734

(The Koran is a rhapsodie of 6,000 verses into 114 sections.)

THE WIVES OF MAHOMET

(It is not certain how many wives Mahomet had. Some writers have placed the number as high as twenty-five. The names given are verifiable.)

Mahomet

married Kadijah with issue thus

Colthum
m. Othman

Zeinab
m. Abul Aass

Rokaia
m. Otho
(divorced)
and remarried
to
Ibn Affan

Fatima
m. to Ali

Kassim
d. in
infancy

Also married

Sawba
Zeinab I
Ayesha
Hafza
Hena
Zeinab II
Barra
Rihana
Safirga
Omru
Habiba
*Marijah
Maimuna

*By this wife he had a son, Ibrahim.

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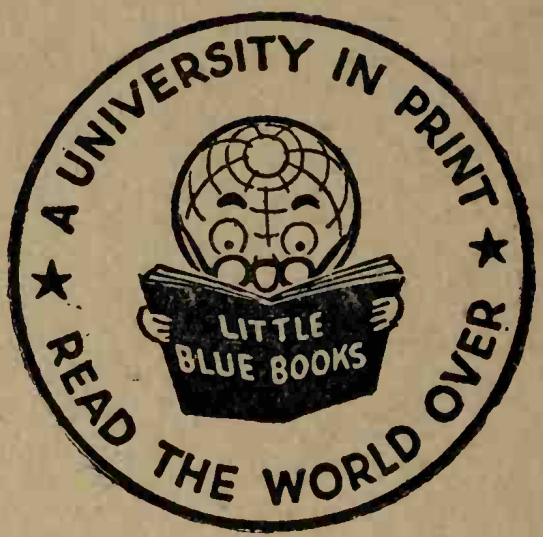
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